
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5368 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT EXTENDING CERTAIN PET SHOP LICENSEE REQUIREMENTS TO PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT IMPORT ANIMALS FOR ADOPTION.

SUMMARY:

This bill makes several changes affecting animal importers. Among other things, it requires animal importers to (1) register with the agriculture commissioner; (2) have the imported animals examined by a state-licensed veterinarian; and (3) notify the Department of Agriculture (DOA) and local zoning officials before offering the animals for sale, adoption, or transfer. The bill establishes various fines for violations of its provisions.

*House Amendment "A" replaces the original file (File 376) with similar provisions relating to animal importers. It adds provisions that (1) require a veterinarian to examine a cat or dog within 48 hours of the animal being imported and within 15 days before the sale, adoption, or transfer of the animal and (2) authorize the agriculture commissioner to inspect imported animals and animal importer's records.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2011

ANIMAL IMPORTER

The bill defines "animal importer" as a person who brings any dog or cat into Connecticut from another sovereign entity to offer it for sale, adoption, or transfer or give it to anyone in exchange for a fee, sale, voluntary contribution, service, or other consideration. An animal importer includes a commercial or nonprofit animal rescue or adoption, humane relocation, or delivery organization that is not required to be licensed under state law. (By law, commercial kennels, pet shops, grooming facilities, and training facilities must be licensed

by the agriculture commissioner.)

REGISTRATION

The bill prohibits an animal importer from importing a dog or cat into Connecticut until he or she registers with the agriculture commissioner and pays a \$100 registration fee. The registration must be on a form the commissioner prescribes and include the (1) registrant's name, mailing and business addresses, telephone number, and Internet address and (2) number of animals imported in the prior year and the state or country of their origin. If the registrant is domiciled out-of-state, the registration also must include the name, Connecticut address, and telephone number of a local agent for service of process.

A registration is valid until the following December 31. An importer must renew the registration annually, if the commissioner determines the importer complies with any applicable regulation relating to the health, safety, and humane treatment of animals.

Violators of the registration requirement are subject to a fine of up to \$500.

Registration is not required by an employee or volunteer of a registered animal importer or person holding a commercial kennel, pet shop, grooming facility, or training facility license if the employee, volunteer, or person is not otherwise an animal importer.

MISCELLANEOUS REQUIREMENTS

Event Notification

The bill requires any animal importer who intends to offer a dog or cat for sale, adoption, or transfer at a public or outdoor location to notify the DOA and the appropriate municipal zoning officer at least 10 days before the event. The notice must include the event date, exact location, and expected number of animals involved. Violators are subject to a fine of up to \$100 per animal.

Pet Shop Exception

The bill's registration and notice provisions do not apply to an animal importer who offers a dog or cat for sale to a licensed pet shop, if the animal is delivered directly to the pet shop.

Agriculture Commissioner Inspection Authority

The bill authorizes the agriculture commissioner to inspect an animal importer's imported animals or required records. But this inspection authority does not give the commissioner permission to enter an animal importer's residence.

Veterinarian Services and Records Required

The bill requires an animal importer, within 48 hours of importing a cat or dog into Connecticut and before offering it for sale, adoption, or transfer, and every 90 days until the sale, adoption, or transfer is complete, to have a state-licensed veterinarian examine the animal. Each animal must be examined by a state-licensed veterinarian within 15 days before a sale, adoption, or transfer and the veterinarian must provide the animal importer a written health certificate for the animal. An animal importer who violates these provisions is subject to a fine of up to \$500 for each unexamined or uncertified animal.

The importer must maintain records of the veterinarian services for three years after they were rendered. Violators are subject to a \$500 fine.

Very Young Animals

By law, a person, firm, or corporation may not import or export for sale a dog or cat under eight weeks old without its mother. It also prohibits the sale of a dog or cat that is under eight weeks old. Under current law, violators are subject to a fine of up to \$100, imprisonment for up to 30 days, or both.

The bill extends the prohibitions to the adoption or transfer of dogs or cats under eight weeks old. It increases the maximum fine for sales from \$100 to \$500 and applies the fine and imprisonment to adoptions and transfers. The maximum term of imprisonment remains the same.

Fine for Lack of Health Certificate

By law, a dog or cat imported into the state must be accompanied by a health certificate issued within 30 days before the importation by a licensed graduate veterinarian. The certificate must state that the animal is not diseased and, if over three months old, is currently vaccinated for rabies. A dog or cat from a rabies quarantine area must have the state veterinarian's permission before importation. Under current law, violators are subject to a fine of up to \$100, imprisonment for up to 30 days, or both. The bill increases the fine to up to \$500.

BACKGROUND

Related Law

By law, a person obtaining a dog or cat for resale must hold a pet shop license. Violators are subject to a fine of up to \$1,000, imprisonment for up to 30 days, or both (CGS § 22-344e).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 27 Nay 0 (03/18/2011)

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 52 Nay 0 (05/10/2011)